

IRTS Radio News Bulletin Sunday January 9th 2005

Condolences

Sincere condolences to Patrick O'Connor EI9HX on the death of his father Seamus, Togher, Ballinasloe on the 15th of December last.

Tsunami in Asia

Amateur radio played an important role in providing emergency communications during the recent disaster, especially in the hours and days immediately after the devastating tidal waves hit the coastal communities in Asia. The earthquake epicentre, off the coast of Sumatra, was close to the Indian-controlled Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Although no amateur radio operations had been permitted from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands since 1987, by pure coincidence, a DXpedition was operating from there at the time the earthquake hit.

Bharathi Prasad, VU2RBI, along with a DXpedition team, had recently received special permission for an amateur radio DXpedition operation from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands using the callsigns VU4NRO and VU4RBI. As soon as the earthquake struck, the DXpedition team switched to handling emergency communications traffic. The local authorities asked for the team's help in carrying various emergency communications traffic. Ram, VU2MYH, and another of the team were despatched to one of the Nicobar Islands that was hard hit.

Normal DXpedition operations have been, of course, suspended. Please do not call VU4 stations unless they call you.

Victor Goonetilleke, 4S7VK, the President of the Radio Society of Sri Lanka (RSSL) said that they're trying hard to organise emergency communications and also doing some food distribution. The task is made more difficult by the fact that the entire eastern coast of the country is badly affected. An amateur radio team was dispatched to the worst affected area to link on HF and try VHF through one of the still-operational repeaters and a co-ordinating centre is to be set up at 'Temple Trees' at the Prime Minister's official residence in Colombo.

The RSSL president also stated that it was wonderful even at a tragic time to link up the south of Sri Lanka with the Prime Minister who comes from the south. The link was established on 3 and 7 MHz. So when all the cellular phone and other means of communications failed, short wave stood bold and proud. It is reported that a group of

Indian amateurs are hoping to provide Sri Lankan amateurs with more spare battery-operated HF equipment and a portable VHF repeater.

In Thailand radio amateurs are helping to relay information between the affected areas along the west coast in the south to government agencies, mostly on VHF and 40 metres, as well as disseminating news and information over VHF frequencies in Bangkok. Echolink, is also being used by allowing radio amateurs to relay information to concerned friends and relatives of those holidaying in the affected areas.

Radio Amateurs in India are coordinating relief operations in the affected areas and assisting local authorities. Radio Amateurs world-wide have already contacted the Indian national society and offered to deliver materials to aid with the relief effort.

Emergency Communications Frequencies in Asia It is important to keep clear of frequencies being used for emergency and health & welfare communications. At present, these are: VU4NRO at Port Blair, Andaman Islands on 14190 kHz. VU4 Emergency Net, Andaman & Nicobar Islands on 14193 and 14160 kHz. 4S7SW in Mathara, Sri Lanka on 14195 and 21295 kHz. South India on 7050 kHz. Indonesia on 7055 kHz and Thailand on 7075 kHz. 4S7, VU2 & 9M2 stations are also heard on 7075 kHz.

Earthquake news from Thailand is available on Echolink node 46601 HS1WFK-1 24 hours a day. Audio off Echolink is available at 217.114.120.2:8002/listen.pls, allowing anyone with a web browser to listen in to the emergency communications traffic on Shoutcast using Winamp.

In order to lend any assistance possible to the disaster area, AMSAT AO-51 has been reconfigured as a store-and-forward PBBS message satellite for those in the disaster area. The normal schedule for AO-51 has been cancelled and the planned mode change to the FM repeater in high power will not occur.

The PBBS will still be open to general amateur use, but operators should be ready to cease BBS operations at any moment and give priority to emergency communications. AMSAT asks that all unattended PBBS operation stops until further notice. The FM repeater on the satellite (downlink 435.300 MHz and Uplink 145.920 MHz) will be turned off to allow maximum power to be used on the PBBS downlink.

Should another configuration of AO-51 be identified as providing more benefit to those in the disaster area, AMSAT will adjust AO-51's operating mode accordingly.

AREN The AREN training net continues for 2005 and the next two events will take place on Saturday January 15th and on February 19th 2005, commencing at 0930. The primary frequency is 7.099 MHz and the secondary frequency is 3.690 MHz. This is a

members only net, however non member traffic will be taken towards the end of the event when the training session has been completed. If you have an interest in Emergency Communications please listen to the net and you are very welcome to call when invited to do so by the NCS.

Enquires about IRTS Emergency Communications are always welcome and should be directed to the Emergency Communication Coordinator John Ketch EI2GN, on 086-2593005 or via e-mail to ei2gn at ketch dot ie.

Kerry Amateur Radio Group

The clubs field day will be held on Saturday the 15th of January, at a location in North Kerry. Stations interested in particular grid squares in Kerry are asked to email their needs to clubinfo at kerry dot com, where it is hoped that more squares can be activated over the coming months.

Up-to-date information on the club and its activities can be found on the web at www.kerry.com

Phoenix Amateur Radio Group

The Phoenix Amateur Radio Club Rally will take place on Sunday the 6th of February 2005 in Coolmine Community School, Blanchardstown. Doors open at 11.00 a.m. and admission is 3 euro. Doors will open for traders at 9.30 a.m. For enquiries regarding tables, phone Tony on 01-8252074.

Cork, European Capital of Culture 2005

To celebrate Cork City's status as European Capital of Culture during 2005, Cork Radio Club has introduced the Capital of Culture Award.

The award is available to all radio amateurs and shortwave listeners and to qualify you need to work or hear the special event station EI05CCC (Echo India Zero Five CCC) and either of the Cork Radio Club callsigns EI5CRC or EI1C during 2005.

Full details will appear on the Cork Radio Club website in the near future. Enquiries to Finbarr EI1CS at buckleyf1 at eircom dot net. All three callsigns will be activated during the coming year.

South Eastern Amateur Radio Group

Please note that there will be no general meeting for January 2005. A committee meeting will take place on Wednesday the 24th of January in place of the general meeting.

This meeting will be convened to organise and set a date of the upcoming Annual General Meeting and all committee members are asked to attend.

For latest information about and announcements from the group, visit www.searg.com

South Dublin Radio Club

The closing date for entries to the SDR Photo Competition is the 11th of January 2005. Presentation of prizes will take place on the 25th of January.

On Tuesday the 11th of January there will be a demonstration on packet by Dave EI3IO. This will include details of the increased packet coverage in the Dublin area and the new features recently added. Visitors are more than welcome.

For more information about South Dublin Radio Club visit the clubs site at www.qsl.net/ei2sdr

Items for inclusion in next weeks Radio News should be forwarded to Mark EI7IS. News should be submitted via e-mail to news@irts.ie for automatic forwarding to both the radio and printed news services. Please note that items for the radio news should reach the editor no later than midday on Fridays.

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